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AVANTILIFE

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST



A Courtly Life

THIS ISSUE

HAPPY DAYS AND FESTIVE CHEER AT AVANTI COURT PRIMARY SCHOOL
HOMEWORK - IT'S ABOUT QUALITY NOT QUANTITY
NITESH GOR INTRODUCES US TO NOT JUST ONE MODE, BUT THREE!

What is Avanti Schools Trust?

Avanti Schools Trust is a significant but focused multi-sponsor/proposer of high quality education for all with a growing number of schools, including VA schools, Academies and Free schools. The Trust now also welcomes convertor academies to join the family and also offers services to third-party schools.

The Trust is differentiated by having very strong community links, supported by grassroots parental demand, and positive working partnerships with the local authorities where we work.

Our Trust and each of our schools are all based on developing the ideals of Educational excellence, Character formation and Spiritual insight.

CONTRIBUTORS

Matthew Whitlock
James Biddulph
Nitesh Gor

DESIGN & LAYOUT

Matthew Whitlock

COVER IMAGE

Diwali festival at Avanti Court Primary School
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Avanti Schools Trust

VISIT US AT

avanti.org.uk
facebook.com/avantischoolstrust

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

info@avanti.org.uk

AVANTI LIFE ENQUIRIES

matthew@avanti.org.uk



AVANTI SCHOOLS
TRUST

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Contents

4 Bright Ideas

The brightness of a James Biddulph shirt is second only to the brightness of his thinking, but are his epiphanies panning out?

7 Getting Acquainted

Can we ever REALLY *KNOW* a person? Knowing the importance they place on a 'parsley garnish' is a start...

8 A Courtly Life

Ever wondered how the other half are living? Avanti Court staff and pupils were most delighted to divulge.

12 Festival of Light

The talented children of Avanti Court take to the stage for the first time and show parents and local community how to celebrate!

15 Reading Corner

Desperate to learn more about India's diversely dazzling culture and traditions? Well, you've come to the right reading corner.

16 Home learning beats home work

James Biddulph looks at the evidence and concludes with an age-old truth: it's about *quality* not *quantity*.

20 The Heart of the Curriculum

Work to develop the Philosophy & Ethics curriculum for Avanti Schools continues, with James Biddulph brainstorming in Belgium.

21 Reasons to Celebrate!

We all like to celebrate, but having a good reason to celebrate makes it all the more meaningful and memorable.

22 Know Thy Mode

Who are we - helpless victims of a cruel world or masters of our own destiny? Nitesh Gor gives us a clue.

18 Hungry for News?

Like many things worth consuming, news is best when fresh, and where is it most abundant? Facebook of course.



Bright Ideas

The brightness of a James Biddulph shirt is second only to the brightness of his thinking, but how are his epiphanies panning out?



You might notice that Avanti Court Primary School in Redbridge, East London gets a lot of attention this issue, but we think you'll agree it's well deserved. This shiny new Voluntary-Aided, state-funded school of four Reception classes and one Year 1 class opened in September 2012, occupying part of the Ilford Jewish Primary School building. Renovation work began earlier in 2012, bringing massive improvements to the classrooms and offices used by Avanti Court in preparation for its first academic year. Pupil intake will be phased over six years, in co-ordination with plans to completely renovate the building and upgrade its facilities.

Headteacher James Biddulph has taught in primary schools since 2001 and is well suited to the needs of Avanti Court and to the vision and specialisms of Avanti

"I want Avanti Court to become one of the most respected and admired co-educational state schools in the UK"

Schools. In 2002 his creative and successful approach to teaching gained him Advanced Skills Teachers (AST) status in Music and in 2003 he was awarded 'Outstanding New Teacher of the Year for London'. He successfully develops creative partnerships with a number of schools and enterprises, developing the Arts to enrich the curriculum and share good practice.

His two Masters degrees focus on children's and teachers' perceptions of creative learning experiences. He is on the review board for the British Journal of Music Education and is a trustee of Stratford Circus (a theatre and arts space in East London). Since April 2010 he has been working on his PhD at Cambridge University focused on Creative Learning in multicultural contexts.



James has high aspirations for his new school, wishing to instil a real love of learning that extends beyond school and into each child's life. "We want children to feel excited about coming to school, engaged in their learning and able to articulate their views in polite and positive ways. I want learning to be irresistible." says James, who clearly takes his responsibility very seriously.

"We work to ensure that every child is prepared to meet their life challenges, with high standards in literacy and mathematics, memorable experiences in the performing arts, together with a reflective, compassionate understanding of themselves and the communities around them. I want Avanti Court to become one of the most respected and admired co-educational state schools in the UK, not only for its place in league tables but because of the pioneering and transforming education it gives the children that come here."


Avanti Court is only one term in, but James' mission is well on track. Parents express genuine satisfaction with the school, seeing their children well

"I have never worked in a school where there is such a positive and enthusiastic parent community"

settled, building friendships and making impressive progress. This in turn is reflected by the willingness of parents and community to support the school (see pages 12–14 for a colourful example of this!), even pledging grassroots cooperation in the opening of an Avanti secondary school in Redbridge, which provided support is unanimous could open in 2014.

James has been moved by his experiences so far. "I have never worked in a school where there is such a positive and enthusiastic parent community. Their flexibility and stalwart commitment to the school gives me courage that what we are doing is the right thing for our young people." And there's a lot being done.

Innovative curriculum development, campaigns such as 'Read to Succeed' (see issue 1) and Golden Expectations, open days, school trips, plays, dressing up days, even a visit from a local farm - all aim to enrich children's learning experiences. After school clubs and classes are on offer to the parents as well. A January workshop called "The Art of Teaching: The Joy of Learning" will explore ways in which parents can support a child's learning by gaining insight and practical skills. James' creative streak is put to good use at Avanti Court, with fresh ideas to inspire pupils emerging constantly.

The future is bright for Avanti Court Primary School and if you're in any doubt, jump to page 12 for the review of their Diwali festival, an artful demonstration of the school's capacity and on-going commitment to not only brighten the lives of its pupils, but the local community as well. 

BELOW:
Wellgate Community Farm bring the farmyard to the playground



Noticeboard

Workshops for Parents at Avanti Court
The Art of Teaching: The Joy of Learning

16th, 23rd & 30th January 2013

Afternoon sessions: 2-3pm

Evening sessions: 5.45-6.45pm

In this short course designed specifically for Avanti Court parents/carers, delegates will explore what we know about learning and teaching. Through a balance of practical activities, discussion and presentations, delegates will learn more about how children learn, how we hope to teach and what progress we expect. The course also includes learning about the unique and distinctive Avanti Philosophy and Ethics curriculum.

* Parents should commit to all three sessions

** We will run this twice. Afternoon and evening sessions are repeated

*** Please sign up to the afternoon OR evening course.

Please sign up to these in the school office next week.

These will be on a first come first served basis.

DO NOT FORGET...

The Avanti Life publishing team is a small one, but it wants to grow. There's actually lots of room for you to contribute and have your say so please feel free to get in touch and get involved!

Write to matthew@avanti.org.uk with your ideas. Look forward to hearing from you.

Getting Acquainted

Meet Neel Sattani – Year 1 Teaching Assistant at Avanti Court

What's your favourite book?

Autobiography of a Yogi

What's your favourite food?

Indian – and also Thai

Where's your favourite holiday destination?

Cuba – it brings happy memories of my wedding

Who would play you in a movie about your life?

This is too hard! I'm too young for a life story!!!

What's your most embarrassing moment?

Tripping up in an interview



Meet Kelly Collins – Receptionist at Avanti Court

What's your favourite book?

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee

What's your favourite food?

Spinach & buffalo ricotta canoloni (with parsley garnish!)

Where's your favourite holiday destination?

Aruba – a tiny Island in the Caribbean

Who would play you in a movie about your life?

Greta Garbo

What's your most embarrassing moment?

I went to a posh ball once and I won a raffle ticket (so I thought) and I ran up on the stage for my prize and they told me it was the wrong colour ticket.



Avanti Courtly Life

Ever wondered how the
other half are living? Avanti
Court staff and pupils were
most delighted to divulge

They certainly are a privileged bunch. Children and staff practically break into song when asked about their day, which is music to one's ears when you consider the school is only one term old. Let's hear it from those lucky enough to spend their time in the halls, offices and classrooms of Avanti Court.



**ABOVE: Junaida Bana
(Deputy Headteacher)**

"The smell of incense wafts through the corridors and a sense of serenity descends upon me, but not for too long!

After a quick check in with my partner in crime (James Biddulph - HT), I run through my diary for the day ahead and respond to emails before dashing over to the teachers for a quick greet/ everything alright kind of meet.

Meeting parents in the morning as they bring in their children is perhaps the highlight of my day. Everyone, including children, buzz with excitement. The school day officially begins!

I rotate between a couple of jobs at a time which may include meeting outside professionals, namely the school nurse, our Educational Psychologist or a quick update with the office team regarding admin tasks or attendance. Then I head off to cover a class to give some NQT time or PPA time. Depending on the day, the monitoring of a focus area takes up my time and if I am lucky I might even manage a quick cuppa to re-invigorate me. Another equally interesting aspect

of my schedule is conducting a workshop for parents together with a member of staff. This gives us the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of our parents and their needs and equally they become au fait with what we as a school want to achieve. They go home feeling empowered and valued.

Lunch time at Avanti Court is an experience. The aroma of freshly cooked food, the buzzing of the little ones followed by the welcoming sound of cutlery is truly uplifting, but not before we

"It's Monday morning. Already the weekend is far away! We get to school, ready for a week - or so we thought! It's like something hits you when you enter a school - your mind starts racing...

"What did I put on the writing table? What do I need to photocopy? NEED TO CHECK THE PLAN!" We hurry down the corridor, checking the time, with so many questions running through our minds: kids will be in at 8.30; the outdoor area needs to be set up but it's pouring with rain. Not forgetting we need

"It all forms the rich tapestry of life at Avanti Court"

thank the Almighty for his bounty. Far too quickly it is time to wish the little ones goodbye and reflect on the impact of what they have learnt for the day. Then the nitty gritty begins. Records, documents, systems and data, some emerging to be embedded and some in discussion but all forming the rich tapestry of life at Avanti Court."

**BELOW: Manisha Mistry
& Deepa Patel
(Reception teachers)**



to have a little chit chat with our colleagues, discussing how their weekend was; what they got up to and who watched X-Factor last night. All of a sudden, it's time to greet our wonderful kids with a beaming smile. We open the doors ready for our day to begin.

We have NQT afternoon today so at least we can take a breath during this busy day. We catch up with Profile Books and some planning then realise we need to get a display up. Being an NQT at Avanti Court is a real learning journey but we know that by drawing upon each others' experience and getting advice at the right moments, we can get through this year. And oh my gosh, our Headteacher keeps finding ways to make us dress up! First an Alien... what next?!?

We honestly don't know what to expect - all we do know is that every day is an exciting adventure when you work in Early Years!"

"On a cold dark morning as the lights in the street slowly flicker on in Carlton Drive, the green gates open to welcome the staff to work. One by one the cars enter the car park. It fills up quickly, leaving only one or two parking spaces empty for people visiting the school. 'Welcome to Avanti Court!' shouts the sign as we walk into the warmth."



ABOVE: Trish Johnson (Pupil Data and Admin Assistant)

"Mr Biddulph our Headteacher, is a very well educated man. His office is located on the second floor of the building and is decorated quite tastefully, though he does tend to be a hoarder of papers, files and general clutter, for which he has to be reminded "a clear desk being an open mind!" He is however, a kind and inspirational young man – although not that young!

Opposite his office is Mrs Bana, the Deputy Headteacher, an approachable lady whose caring attitude to life is well evident as she sings around the school offering peace and tranquillity like a humming bird in song. Mr Koorrich the Business & Finance Manager: a loving chap, who works hard and has a deep passion above and beyond his duties. Back downstairs to the main reception office (where life here is often described as an 'adventure') sits Kelly Collins front of house – a rather happy, smiley lady who's motherly ways brings warmth and order to all who enter into the room. This is where hard work made of paper cuts, deadlines and cheer are made.

Finally me, I'm Trish – Trish Johnson Pupil Data/Attendance Officer. No time to chat – got to meet my daily deadlines. I have targets to meet and calls to make. It doesn't mean I am not a kind person, I'm just so!

8.20am fills up with our community and the children. Our Teachers and Teaching Assistants, ever happy and jolly, open the doors to meet them all, in the rain, snow, cold and sunshine – the happy faces of Avanti Court Primary School. Children start the day with registration at 8.30am then study time begins, the office team works hard and are greeted by smiles and welcomes from Mr Biddulph, Mrs Bana and Mr Koorrich as they in turn greet each class as they work.

10.45am break time we hear the children roar with laughter and are playing with joy. Before we realise it, it's lunchtime. 1pm and it's that time again – registers, learning, singing, and joy the children are happy. Often as I take a walk around, I see teachers enjoying their time with their classes and we smile together and wave, for this is, by mutual agreement, what we know as Avanti Court life!

Lights off, alarm set, doors locked, then it's back to switching the car lights on as the gates open again and close behind us. The street lights are on and with a final look in the mirror Avanti Court fades away in the evening mist, as thoughts of our families and homes begin to fill our thoughts."



ABOVE: Reva and Shiven
 RIGHT: A day at school by Shiven
 BELOW: A day at school by Reva

A Courtly Life

Dear diary,
 Do you know how my day went in Avanti Court today? School began at 8:30 am. First we did our register then the meditation. After that we began our lesson. At 12 pm it was time for lunch and we prayed to god before our prasadam.
 After lunch when our lesson started I got a silver award. 3:10 pm was time for home. I was really happy today. 😊

My name is Shiven, I am in year 1 at Avanti Court School. My favourite day is Thursday because it is pizza day. In the morning I go to breakfast club I have delicious chocolate spread on toast. After register we do meditation. We have guided reading I like guided reading because we read interesting books. My favourite book is the Selfish Crocodile. In numeracy I have been learning about number lines and how they help us to do our sums. Me and my friends enjoy playing football every playtime. We learn lots of new words in Sanskrit. In literacy we have been writing space stories. We have clubs every single day. We made amazing exploding volcanoes in science club.



FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

On 12th November, Avanti Court opened its doors to host parents and community for its first official event. The evening of entertainment was held in celebration of Diwali, the festival of lights.

Dressed in spectacular costumes, pupils performed a play depicting the story of Rama and Sita as well as singing songs about the festival. Entertainment included live Kirtan music and dance performances by the Sanskriti Dance Group.

Special guests included Redbridge Mayor Councillor Muhammed Javed, School Governor Edward Anobah and Mark Evans, the Education Director for Avanti Schools Trust.

Guests also enjoyed tucking into a hill made entirely of Indian sweets, which signifies the sacred Govardhan Hill. This custom originates from a Vaishnava festival, the dates of which coincide with the dates of Diwali. The colour and sparkle of the pupil's performances was matched by the final treat of the night - a firework display in the school's grounds.



FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

Bringing the community together is an important aspect of any school and it was an incredible statement of the support and commitment of the school's emerging status that over 400 parents and friends attended the Diwali festival event. Headteacher James Biddulph reflects:

"Avanti Court's first official event took place on a cold and damp British Autumn evening. Guided by the excitement of seeing Year 1 children perform their version of the Rama and Sita story and hearing the beautiful sound of Kirtan, over 400 parents, governors, children, friends and extended families braved the elements to attend the event. The evening was also attended by His Worshipful Mayor Mohammad Javed, Mayor of Redbridge, who gave a short speech to spread the message of empathy and sharing.

Following a colourful and jazzy romp through the story of Rama overcoming the darkness and evil represented by Ravana, the Reception children sang an Indian song and the well known Gospel song, This Little Light of Mine. One of our parents is also a classical Indian dance teacher and kindly brought her more experienced dancers to entertain us with stories of Krishna's pastimes.

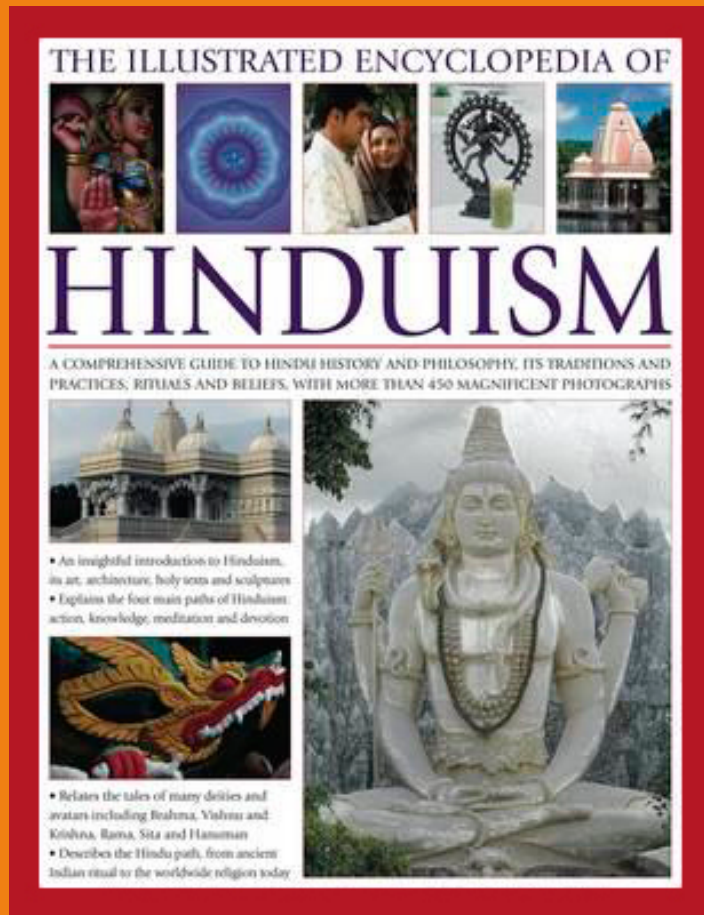
Before the fireworks started, we ate prasadam (blessed food) together, offering flowers to Krishna during this month of Kartik and writing prayers on paper diva lamps. And NUSound radio provided cultural music while we ate and chatted.

As Headteacher, this was a special event for me. To stand in front of such a positive and committed community, which I humbly take the opportunity to lead, reminds me of the privileged task we have as school leaders and educators - and also the enormity of it! A wise man told me once that schools are holy places. They are holy because they can inspire awe and wonder, community, understanding, friendship and define our responsibilities as individuals in our societies. Our first event in our very young history helped define our responsibility: to continue to find courage and strive for excellence, to mould our young people to want to achieve our seven values and to guide them to find and develop their spirituality on their first steps on a journey of self-discovery."

How schools develop the Festivals Curriculum is down to the staff and leadership to reflect the needs and desires of their own school communities. What was discovered at Avanti Court was a great commitment to the ethos and vision of Avanti Schools - that the spiritual growth of children is as important as their academic achievement.



While treasure hunting, James Biddulph discovers two valuable gems of learning; both dedicated to the history, culture and religion of India



The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism

By Rasamandala Das, M. Narasimhachary - Lorenz Books (2011) - Hardback - 256 pages - ISBN 0754820564

Hinduism is perhaps the world's oldest major religion. This comprehensive book explores its rich historical and cultural development, from its Indian roots to its vibrant application in the present, global context. The first section examines the origins of Hinduism, exploring the holy texts and their teachings about the self, the law of karma, and the cycle of birth and death.

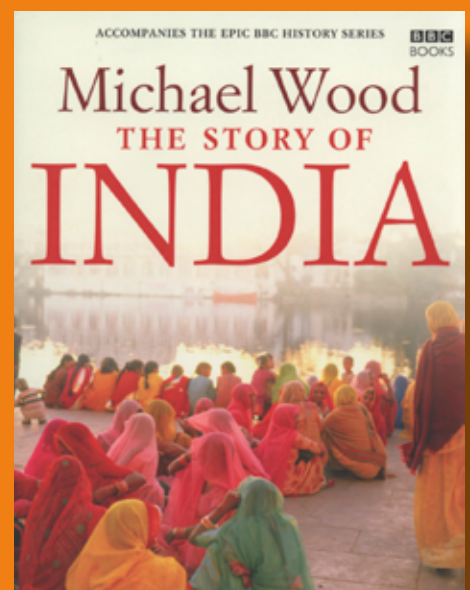
The second part focuses on spiritual practices - the four main paths and the many Hindu deities. The final section analyses Hindu society, culture and arts. This accessible book provides the perfect reference for anyone wishing to explore the compelling faith and culture that is Hinduism.

It provides a visually rich read, to inform teachers and to inspire children and students. Written by Rasamandala Das, a curriculum consultant to Avanti Schools Trust (see page 20 to learn more about the work of Rasamandala Das), it is a valuable book for any school library but in particular for our Avanti Schools.

The Story of India

By Michael Wood - Random House UK (2008) - Paperback - 320 pages - ISBN 1846074606

Another book to recommend is Michael Wood's *The Story of India*. Following a successful BBC4 documentary, this book provides a swift traverse through the history of India from early gatherers from Africa to the freedom from the British Empire to its modern status as a super power. The book guides the reader through a complex network of battles and victories, introducing historic characters and religion which helped carve the incredible statue that is incredible India. An easy and worthwhile read.



Home Learning: The Avanti Court Way

We aim for children to experience learning that is relevant to their lives, to develop learning and questioning skills and to deepen motivation, understanding and personal insight.

Through a curriculum that is engaging, broad, flexible and challenging so that they can build on their own talents, aptitudes and skills. We want children to be:

- Questioners
- Debaters
- Critical thinkers
- Compassionate listeners
- Thoughtful and responsible leaders
- Interested and engaged readers
- Confident performers
- Keen lifelong learners

We have drawn on research about how best to instil a love of learning in children so that they are positive and reflective, with an attitude that learning requires effort and that through effort you can achieve. Traditional 'worksheet' homework does not raise standards. Two large works on homework are from Professor Susan Hallam (Institute of Education, University of London) and The Sutton Trust Research Group. We looked at the research to see what homework – which we call 'Home Learning' – achieves... or not.

Research questions benefit of homework

Excerpt from a Guardian article

Homework can cause family friction, particularly when middle-class

parents pressure their children to succeed, according to a report published by London University's Institute of Education. And the benefits of homework are often negligible, concludes Susan Hallam in her review of 75 years' worth of studies into homework. The issue has been causing controversy for generations in the US, Europe, Australia, the Far and Middle East, as well as the UK. Dr Hallam urges

“At home, rows about homework can damage the parent-child relationship and outweigh any educational advantage”

schools to focus on the purpose and quality of homework, not the amount, and makes a case for homework being done in out-of-hours school clubs rather than at home. At home, rows about homework can damage the parent-child relationship and outweigh any educational advantage, she says.

"Homework can also create anxiety, boredom, fatigue and emotional exhaustion in children, who resent the encroachment on their free-time, even though they think homework helps them do well at school," believes Dr Hallam.

Her book, *Homework: the Evidence*, finds that family rows can



lead to homework being deliberately not completed. "Parental help may also develop dependency or helplessness in the child."

She adds: "Parents have the

Homework can boost achievement, but only when set in moderate amounts, argues Dr Hallam. She says the government's guidance of one hour a week for

"Homework can boost achievement, but only when set in moderate amounts"

most positive influence when they offer moral support, make appropriate resources available and discuss general issues. They should only actually help with homework when their children specifically ask them to."

Dr Hallam feels the evidence points to the effectiveness of homework clubs, which give children the benefits without the rows at home: "Children feel [clubs] make homework more enjoyable and give them a better chance of passing exams.

"They provide a suitable learning environment with appropriate resources and adult help if necessary, and they take the pressure off the parents. They may assist in raising standards for those who need extra support or who find it difficult to do homework at home. As such they help to bridge the gap between the haves and the have nots," she says.

five to seven-year-olds, rising to two and a half hours a day for GCSE students, is untested. Dr Hallam asserts that the overall contribution that homework makes to school achievement is small compared with prior knowledge, the time spent on task, good attendance at school, motivation and self-confidence.

More to read

- *Homework: The Evidence* by Susan Hallam (available from the Institute of Education, +44 (0)20 7612 6050, ioe@johnsmith.co.uk)
- www.centerforpubliceducation.org/What-research-says-about-the-value-of-homework
- <http://www.suttontrust.com/research/toolkit-of-strategies-to-improve-learning>

Home Learning: The Avanti Court Way

This rigorous research data and statistics challenge our preconceived ideas and view about homework and that more homework is better. As a school we expect teachers to spend time marking children's recorded learning in books because this seems to have high impact on children's progress and attainment. This takes between 1½ and 2 hours an evening. Marking homework is an ineffective use of time – because it seems that homework doesn't help raise the children's standards in literacy and numeracy.

Parents have stated that their children are more

engaged with these types of projects, that they enjoy doing this together as a family. Shivom's parents said that "he was interviewing his Grandparents to find out when they came to India and were actually discussing what it was like...he's never done this before".

Learning should be difficult and challenge children. But it should inspire and engage children to see themselves as constant researchers in a world in which knowledge and information is growing exponentially – a world in which the problems and challenges they will face have not yet been invented!

What we do at Avanti Court

- 1 Home Learning projects are given out each half term. These include a variety of engaging activities including research, number, writing, reading, model making, designing, being creative, asking questions and exploring.
- 2 Home Learning is about the whole family coming together to be part of the learning experience. It should be enjoyable because the learning is meaningful – it is not done TO the children but WITH them.
- 3 It is all children's learning – the criteria is (a) children's writing and mark making, (b) families help children but do not 'do it for them' (c) be presented in a creative and well thought out way
- 4 Site words and phonics repetition activities daily
- 5 Maths facts to be learnt daily (e.g. timetables and number bonds etc)
- 6 Reciting and memorising poetry and quotes to inspire

BELOW: Examples of project outcomes RIGHT: 'Journeys' Project brief





Home Learning Project Brief

Topic Journeys

TERM	YEAR GROUP	HAND IN DATE
Autumn 2	Year 1	Friday 14th December 2012

CONTEXT

This half term the year 1 Geography topic is based on journeys. We will be looking at the kinds of journeys we make, how we get there and how we could use a map or atlas to help us reach our journey.

WHAT I NEED TO DO

Your task is to make a travel brochure which highlights all the journeys you have made in your life. The journeys could range from a simple car or train journey to exciting journeys abroad. You could include special photos taken on your journey and you could also write instructions on how to get to your special journey. You could also draw and label the types of transport used in your journeys. You may want to draw a map of your journey. You may want to look up your journey using googlemaps. You could also write an adventure story about an imaginary journey such as a space trip to the moon! As an extra, you may want to make a video diary of your journey. Finally you could measure the distance of your journey.

RESOURCES I WILL NEED	SKILLS I WILL USE	USEFUL WEBSITES
1. Paper and pencil 2. Camera to take photos 3. Train tickets/boarding passes 4. Special items brought back from special journeys	1. Questioning 2. Drawing 3. Writing 4. Measuring 5. Observing and recording 6. Map reading	http://www.googlemaps.com

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT	HOW CAN AN ADULT HELP ME
1. What journeys have I been on? 2. What type of transport is needed for my journeys? 3. Can I write a story about an exciting journey? 4. Can I draw a map of a recent journey I have made?	Adults can support me by reminding me what I need to remember when writing sentences. They can also help me to draw a map of my journey and to draw and label the type of transport used.

DAILY HOME LEARNING	LEARN HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS
Read for at least 20 mins Learn Number bonds to 10 or 20 Practise 2, 5, and 10 times tables	Refer to Reading Record

The Heart of the Curriculum

Our Philosophy & Ethics Curriculum continues to evolve and James Biddulph, Headteacher at Avanti Court Primary School, recently visited Bhaktivedanta College, Belgium to continue its development, spending three days working with author and academic, Rasamandala Das and his wife Abala, a lecturer at the college. Rasamandala comments:

"We have the pleasure of serving the Avanti School Trust, working closely with James to write the new Philosophy & Ethics Curriculum. After further consultation with teachers, this document will

form the heart of the Avanti Schools Curriculum. It will help form and maintain their distinct spiritual character, underpinned by the universal teachings of Saint Chaitanya. The curriculum stresses not mere conformity, but the development of personal insight, critical thought and responsible self-expression. It is centred on the value of humility, and is aligned - over six half-terms - to six other corresponding virtues: empathy, self-discipline, respect, integrity, courage and gratitude.

We found working with James both intellectually stimulating

and heart-warming. We are honoured to work with the Trust and all those who kindly support this daring new initiative!"

Rasamandala Das, an educational consultant, holds an MA in Religious Education from Warwick University. He is author of the much-acclaimed 'Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism'.

His wife, Abala, has a degree in Philosophy and Religious studies and a PGCE (Secondary), specialising in Religious Education. She currently teaches philosophy at Bhaktivedanta College in Belgium.

More Reasons to Celebrate!

As well as the P&E curriculum which is based on the seven values in our ethos (Humility, Empathy, Self-discipline, Courage, Respect, Integrity, Gratitude) Avanti Primary schools offer a Festivals Curriculum which aims to bring the school community together for different festivals to provide memorable spiritual insight experiences. The Festivals Curriculum supports the aims of daily collective worship in nurturing the personal and loving relationships between children, the school community and God. The secondary school provision is different and will emerge as







staff at Avanti House develop the Philosophy & Ethics curriculum and those special moments in a school's life.







During these six special days, systematic Religious Education is delivered with at least 1½ hours dedicated to this study. This aims to help children develop a robust framework for authentic knowledge and understanding of each tradition.

There is one Celebratory Festival Day each term, with the main aim of providing a memorable, uplifting spiritual experience. Throughout the year, other festivals will also be celebrated, as marked during, say,

Collective Worship. The Celebratory Festivals Curriculum runs over a core two-year cycle, to enable coverage of all six major 'world faiths'. Children will encounter all of the six main traditions in each phase (i.e. Years 1–2, 3–4, and 5–6). But schools are free to design their festival day and find ways to connect with their communities.

See previous pages 12–14 for how one school provided memorable spiritual experiences for its young learners which culminated in an evening performance and community event.

SCHOOL YEAR	2012–2013					
TERM	AUTUMN 1	AUTUMN 2	SPRING 1	SPRING 2	SUMMER 1	SUMMER 2
TRADITION	Vaishnavism 	Christianity 	Judaism 	Hinduism 	Buddhism 	Vaishnavism 
FESTIVAL	Govardhana Puja	Christmas	Passover	Gaura Purnima	Buddha's Birthday	Rathayatra

SCHOOL YEAR	2013–2014					
TERM	AUTUMN 1	AUTUMN 2	SPRING 1	SPRING 2	SUMMER 1	SUMMER 2
TRADITION	Islam 	Sikhism 	Christianity 	Hinduism 	Vaishnavism 	Vaishnavism 
FESTIVAL	Eid	Guru Nanak's Birthday	Easter	Holi	Narasimha Chaturdasi	Janmastami



Know Thy Mode

Who are we - helpless victims of a cruel world or masters of our own destiny? Nitesh Gor gives us a clue in the following excerpt from his book 'The Dharma of Capitalism - A Guide to Mindful Decision Making in the Business of Life'

Hindu and Buddhist philosophies break down human behaviour into three basic instincts or tendencies: creation, preservation and destruction. These three *gunas*, as they are known by their Sanskrit name, describe a cycle of evolution that should sound familiar.

In love, for example, relationships tend to begin with passion, evolve into commitment and marriage, and too often end in boredom or rancor. In business, the cycle similarly begins with the passion required to invent things, innovate processes, and build companies. The second step is making those companies profitable, sustainable and responsible. Finally, when we aren't mindful, they become casualties of complacency and carelessness, as did Wall Street investment banks that bet heavily on risky credit vehicles.

The response to the destructive phase is often focused on blame, punishment and regulation aimed at keeping it from happening again. These are passionate reactions that assume we can engineer better outcomes by isolating bad people and discouraging bad behaviour.

But the history of business is built on failure. The nature of capitalism is a 'perennial gale of creative destruction', observed economist Joseph Schumpeter in 1942.

The Dharma of Capitalism explains the *gunas* as

three principal motives or modes of behaviour by which every decision can be assessed - the Modes of Ignorance, Passion and Goodness. In ascending order, they also describe increasing levels of awareness. The process of good decision-making begins with evaluating the choices we face to determine whether the primary motivation is complacency, carelessness or oversight (ignorance); greed, pride or some short-term benefit or reaction (passion); or whether the motivation takes into account all stakeholders and the decision is informed by knowledge of and custodianship for outcomes (goodness).

The Three Modes are by definition hierarchical: from the inaction of Ignorance we move up the scale to the activity of Passion and from there strive to achieve the balance and mindfulness of choices made primarily in the Mode of Goodness. There is no finish line or mountain top in this process. All three of the Modes are at work in almost every situation and in every person, to one degree or another.

BELOW: If you accept the *dharmic* notion that there is a higher purpose to business and money than profit and pleasure, the Modes will help you stay on track by identifying which is dominant at any given time.

↑ The Mode of Goodness

Often the tough choice, to act mindfully, with knowledge, purpose and a desire for the long-term benefit of all, characterized by fairness, transparency and trust. This is the mode in which we resist quick fixes and consider the lasting and unseen consequences of every action and choice.

↻ The Mode of Passion

The alluring choice, acting on the desire for short-term pleasure or results, characterized by pride, narcissism, extremes, unpredictability. This is the engine of greed, addiction and risk-taking, but also of inspiration, innovation and entrepreneurial success.

↓ The Mode of Ignorance

The lazy choice, acting out of carelessness or disregard for consequences, characterized by lethargy, cynicism, a desire for quick relief from suffering, taking the easy way out.

Know Thy Mode

Like any skill, acting in the Mode of Goodness can become second nature, but it takes practice, discipline and the occasional short-term sacrifice.

Going on the premise that we act our way into thinking (as opposed to the other way around), to figure out which mode you're in at any given moment it's helpful to keep track of your actions and outcomes and be honest in identifying your real motivations.

In the following pages you will find some specific characteristics of each of the Three Modes in different areas of life and work. Once you've obtained a sense of the behaviour that tends to define each mode, take a few minutes at the end of each day to jot down some notes about decisions you've faced or made, evaluating them in the context of the Modes, for example:

- What was my true motivation?
- What mode was I in?
- Did I consider all the consequences of my actions?

In some situations you may be primarily in the Mode of Ignorance. In others you may be in Passion or Goodness. In still others the dominant mode may be unclear. Thinking about the difference will help develop a thought process for approaching future choices.

Do this for a few weeks, noting any changes in your behaviour. Give yourself permission to backslide and to be bewildered at times. If it was easy, you wouldn't be reading this book.

Worldview in the Modes

State of Mind in the Modes

Communication in the Modes

Personal Choices in the Modes

Careers in the Modes

↓ Ignorance

- Interest limited to immediate sphere of existence
- Disinterested in global or social issues
- Defeatist, no value seen in striving for change
- Bitter, negative, pessimistic

↻ Passion

- Narcissistic
- Self-perceived as special, unique, better than others
- Living only for today

↑ Goodness

- Feeling connected to the world
- Aware of a higher purpose
- Aware of consequences
- Tying personal benefit to benefit of others

- Disinterested in knowledge and growth
- Lacking goals or desire to achieve
- Life feeling out of balance
- Confused, helpless, depressed, jaded, angry

- Highly motivated to succeed
- Mentally agitated or anxious
- Preoccupied with profit or advantage
- Desires, emotions hard to control
- Perplexed by moral dilemmas

- Mind is peaceful, calm
- Sense of control over desires and thoughts
- Detachment from base instincts of mind and body
- Lacking personal agendas
- Instinctively knowing the right thing to do

- Aggressive, argumentative, defensive, profane
- Unconcerned for feelings of others
- Critical, sarcastic, ridiculing
- Cynical, suspicious

- Rash, impulsive
- Interrupting, reactive
- Self-involved, narcissistic
- Manipulative

- Listening well
- Curious, desiring to learn
- Honest about motivations, feelings
- Empathic
- Inviting, non-confrontational
- Avoiding and ignoring gossip

- Seeking the easy way out
- Avoiding choices
- Disinterested in moral issues
- Unconcerned about consequences or benefits
- Unconcerned about violence or distress to others
- Prone to laziness

- Motivated by prospect of reward or pleasure
- Crave personal credit or recognition
- Ignoring sound advice
- Exploiting knowledge solely for personal gain or status

- Acting in a calm, regulated way
- Motivated by responsibility
- Desiring to serve a greater cause
- Sacrificing short-term gain to do the right thing

- Poorly managed work space
- Workers treated disrespectfully
- Motivated only by a salary
- Disinterested in personal development
- Disinterested in organization
- Work performed mechanically
- Avoiding responsibility

- Desiring personal accomplishment, wealth, power
- Ambitious, determined, workaholic
- Self-identifying as heroic or courageous
- Money and status trump ethics and work quality

- Life-long learning
- Motivated by betterment of self
- Aspiring to provide quality products or services
- Attracted to work that involves improving the lives of others



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For the vast majority, it's a source of news, which is why Avanti Schools Trust has created its own Facebook



page. Facebook is designed to make sharing news easy, but this is where our challenge lies. The spread of our latest news depends not on word of mouth, but word of mouse. Unless interested people click 'like' for Avanti Schools Trust, they'll never get to hear from us.

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